

Forestry Department Emergency Operating Plan for Duration of “Safer at Home Order” for Covid 19

Forestry, Recreation and Land Department Offices will be operational 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with limited staff available on site. Forestry staff schedule and contact information is available below.

Establishment as an Essential Operation:

Income generated through timber sales is a critical component for Vilas County and becomes an essential operation during a state of emergency declarations. Timber sale income generated during such a declaration, with County Board approval, may be utilized directly by the County for emergency response. With uncertainty of income need and cost brought about by an emergency, any and all income generation is required to meet response demand. This establishes forestry positions as essential employees under a state of emergency declaration by the County.

In addition to the above, the March 19, 2020 “MEMORANDUM ON IDENTIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS DURING COVID-19 RESPONSE” from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), under “Food and Agriculture”, identifies “Workers who support the manufacture and distribution of forest products including, but not limited to timber, paper and other forest products as Critical Infrastructure Workers. Wood produced from Vilas County timber sales provides critical supplies to the paper industry of which products produced from this industry provides medical supplies which are in short supply and drastically needed during the Covid-19 response. This establishes Vilas County forestry positions as essential employees under national declarations.

Identification of Essential Employees:

Forestry operations consistently operate with a minimum amount of staffing as the goal of maximizing income and minimizing cost to the county. Current staffing levels includes a forest administrator, an assistant forest administrator, a forestry technician, and a ½ time administrative assistant. Maintaining and tracking existing contracts including accounting for wood produced as well as preparation of 2020 timber sales for advertisement, bidding and sale, to maintain timber sale income levels, requires all forestry positions to complete. This establishes **all forestry positions as essential employees**, any reduction the number of employees will lead to reduced timber production and reduced income to Vilas County during the existing State of emergency.

Prioritization of Operations:

Priority Operation #1:

Maintaining timber sale operations including accounting for wood harvested and tracking contracts which are active are the highest priority for the forestry program. In the event of unexpected reduction in staffing levels, this process shall be maintained over all other activity. If unexpected staffing level reductions due to Covid-19 infections eliminate the ability of the County to maintain this activity, action needs to be taken by the County to suspend all timber sale contracts to protect the interest and assets of the County.

Priority Operation #2:

Preparation, advertisement, bidding and sale of the 2020 timber sales shall be the second highest priority. If unexpected staffing level reductions due to Covid-19 infections eliminate the ability of the County to maintain this activity, all resources shall be utilized to maintain priority #1.

Priority Operation #3:

Preparation and completion of non-timber sale planned projects such as site preparation, tree planting and timber stand improvement contracts shall be the third highest priority. If unexpected staffing level reductions due to Covid-19 infections eliminate the ability of the County to maintain this activity, all resources shall be utilized to maintain priority #1 & #2 above.

Priority Operation #4:

Completion of regular maintenance projects such property line identification and remarkation, sign repair and replacement, road inspections, road maintenance and trail maintenance projects shall be the lowest priority projects during the declaration. If unexpected staffing level reductions due to Covid-19 infections eliminate the ability of the County to maintain this activity, all resources shall be utilized to maintain priority #1, #2, & #3 above.

Chain of Command and Critical Staffing Levels:

Chain of command of the forestry program is as follows:

Position #1. Forest Administrator

Position #2. Assistant Forest Administrator

Position #3. Forestry Technician

Position #4. Administrative Assistant.

In the event of any position becomes incapacitated due to Covid-19 infections chain of command shall be adjusted upward according to the order vacated.

Critical Staffing Levels and Workload Adjustments:

While all employees are required to maintain operations at the optimum level, an unexpected reduction in position #1 or #2 can be absorbed by reductions or work in operations #2 or #3. If both positions #1 and #2 are incapacitated, assistance may be requested from the Wisconsin DNR to temporarily fill those positions. If #3 or #4 or both are incapacitated, workload will be adjusted with reductions in operations #3 or #4 to provide time for shifting completion of duties for positions incapacitated.

Scheduling, Work Location and Operational Adjustments:

Forestry, Recreation and Land Department Offices will be operational 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with limited staff available on site. Forestry staff schedule and contact information is available below.

In an effort to reduce potential transmission of the virus and meet social distancing requirements, the following will be operating procedures for the Forestry Department, modification to this procedure may be made by the position which is highest in chain of command with approval of the County:

The office entryway will be open to the public, but the internal office doors will be locked and closed to the public, limiting access inside the office. Employee schedules and contact numbers will be posted within the entryway.

All staff will be available by phone, e-mail or by appointment only. Items which must be provided to the public will be processed by mail or e-mail when possible or completed and placed in the office entryway drop boxes for private pick up.

Staffing levels on site will be limited within the office space by scheduling with a minimum of one employee staffing the office during regular office hours.

Staff, when other individuals are present will maintain mandatory 6' separation from all other individuals, to the extent possible.

Staff is restricted to utilization of only their assigned vehicle and sanitization procedure for that vehicle. In the event of a vehicle break-down the position which is highest in chain of command will reassign vehicle usage as needed.

Staff working scheduled office hours are responsible for sanitizing touched surfaces including all door

Staff working scheduled office hours are responsible for mail pick-up, processing of any deliveries, and directing phone calls to proper telecommuting staff.

Staff work locations will vary based upon staff positions and may include intermittent work at the office, work from home or from the field with telecommuting and phone access. All phones will be forwarded from office phones to the employee's cell phone during all scheduled work hours.

Staff will begin a 4 day 10 hour work week beginning on March 30, 2020 to reduce the number of days of possible personal contact. **Work schedules will cover Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.**

Staff scheduled directly to field shall punch in and out as normal. It is expected that employees spend no more than 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes at quitting time inside the forestry building to gather required supplies and access their assigned vehicle to leave for the field.

For safety reasons field staff shall provide a location of work to the position which is highest in chain of command by text or e-mail prior to leaving the office and upon return from the field.

The following will be the staff work schedule for the duration of the "Safer at Home Order", scheduling is subject to approval and may be modified by the Forest Administrator or the person who is highest in the chain of command as necessary:

Al Murray- Forest Administrator

Phone: 715-891-0388 e-mail: almurr@vilascountywi.gov

Mondays: Telecommuting from home, available by phone or e-mail, open for appointments and available at office by request with a 1-hour notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Some short attendance at the office is anticipated.

Tuesdays: Telecommuting from home, available by phone or e-mail, open for appointments and available at office by request with a 1-hour notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Some short attendance at the office is anticipated.

Wednesdays: Scheduled to be the forestry employee in office from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00, available by phone or e-mail, in person by appointment.

Thursdays: Scheduled to be the forestry employee in office from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00, available by phone or e-mail, in person by appointment

Friday: Not scheduled at office but available by phone or e-mail, some short attendance at the office may occur.

Jeremiah Oftedahl- Assistant Forest Administrator

Phone: 715-891-3543 e-mail: jeofte@vilascountywi.gov

Mondays: Scheduled to be the forestry employee in office from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00, available by phone or e-mail, in person by appointment. Prior to end of day, will provide an e-mail or text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Tuesday for approval.

Tuesdays: Scheduled directly to field work, telecommuting from field, available by phone or e-mail, open for appointments and available at office by request with adequate notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Prior to end of day, will provide an e-mail or text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Wednesday for approval.

Wednesdays: Scheduled directly to field work, telecommuting from field, available by phone or e-mail, open for appointments and available at office by request with adequate notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Prior to end of day, will provide an e-mail or text to forest administrator with work and location(s) or office work scheduled for Thursday for approval.

Thursdays: Telecommuting from home, available by phone or e-mail, open for appointments and available at office by request with a 1-hour notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., scheduled directly to field work as needed. Prior to end of day, will provide an e-mail or text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Monday for approval.

Friday: Not a scheduled work day

James Jefferson- Forestry Technician

Phone: 715-617-6063 e-mail: jajeff@vilascountywi.gov

Mondays: Scheduled directly to field work, available by phone from field, open for appointments and available at office by request with adequate notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Prior to end of day, will provide a text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Tuesday for approval.

Tuesdays: Scheduled directly to field work, available by phone from field, open for appointments and available at office by request with adequate notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Prior to end of day, will provide a text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Wednesday for approval.

Wednesdays: Scheduled directly to field work, available by phone from field, open for appointments and available at office by request with adequate notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Prior to end of day, will provide a text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Thursday for approval.

Thursday: Scheduled directly to field work, available by phone from field, open for appointments and available at office by request with adequate notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Prior to end of day, will provide a text to forest administrator with work and location(s) scheduled for Monday for approval.

Friday: Not a scheduled work day

Kelly Tyler- Forestry Administrative Assistant

Phone: 715-891-9679 e-mail: ketyler@vilascountywi.gov

Mondays: Not a scheduled work day

Tuesdays: Scheduled to be the forestry employee in office from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00, available by phone or e-mail, in person by appointment. Prior to end of day, will provide an e-mail or text to forest administrator with work scheduled for Wednesday for approval.

Wednesdays: Telecommuting from home, available by phone or e-mail, open for appointments and available at office by request with a 1-hour notice between 6:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Thursdays: To be determined by Parks and Recreation Administrator, Prior to end of day, will provide an e-mail or text to forest administrator with work scheduled for Friday for approval.

Friday: Scheduled to be the forestry employee in office from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00, available by phone or e-mail, in person by appointment.

Al Murray

Forest Administrator

Vilas County Forestry

330 Court Street, Eagle River, WI 54521

 : (715) 479-5160 |  : (715) 616-1620

 : almurr@vilascountywi.gov | <http://vilascountywi.gov>